



Mary-Ann Warmerdam
Director

Department of Pesticide Regulation



Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

Sonoma County Pesticide Regulatory Program 2007/2008 Performance Evaluation Report

**California Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Pesticide Regulation
1001 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814**

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Performance Evaluation of Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner Pesticide Use Enforcement Program

This report provides a performance evaluation of Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's (CAC's) pesticide use enforcement (PUE) program for the fiscal year 2007/2008. The assessment evaluates the performance of goals identified in the CAC's enforcement work plan as well as the program's adherence to Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) standards as described in the Pesticide Use Enforcement Standards Compendium.

I. Summary Report of Core Program Elements

A) Restricted Materials Permitting:

The restricted materials permitting program element was found to meet DPR standards and work plan goals.

B) Compliance Monitoring:

The compliance monitoring program element was found to meet DPR standards and work plan goals.

C) Enforcement Response:

The enforcement response program element was found to meet DPR standards and work plan goals.

Summary Statement:

Sonoma CAC's pesticide use program is currently effective.

II. Assessment of Core Program Effectiveness and Work Plan Goals

A) Restricted Materials Permitting:

1) Permit Issuance

The Sonoma CAC permit issuance procedures and performance were evaluated through records review and interviews of relevant staff and found to conform to DPR standards and expectations. Fourteen biologists that issue permits possess Pesticide Regulation and Investigation and Environmental Monitoring licenses. Currently, one biologist position is open and will be filled. The DPR evaluation determined that permits are:

- Issued only to qualified applicants;
- Signed by authorized persons;
- Issued for time periods allowed by law; and that
- Permit amendments follow approved procedures.

2) Site Evaluation

The Sonoma CAC site evaluation procedures were evaluated through records review and interviews of relevant staff and found to conform to DPR standards

and expectations. The CAC issued 235 agricultural permits and 360 nonagricultural permits during the 2007/2008 fiscal year. The permits:

- Contained the necessary information;
- Identified treatment areas and sensitive areas that could be adversely impacted by the permitted uses; and
- Identified mitigation measures and included conditions that addressed known hazards.

The CAC staff adequately evaluated permits and determined if the use of feasible alternatives was required. Staff reviewed Notices of Intent in a timely manner and adequately monitored agricultural and nonagricultural permits utilizing pre-application site evaluations and use monitoring inspections.

B) Compliance Monitoring:

1) Inspections

The Sonoma CAC permit inspection procedures and performance were evaluated through DPR record review and interviews and was found to conform to DPR standards and expectations. Fourteen biologists that possess Pesticide Regulation and Investigation and Environmental Monitoring licenses perform inspections. Inspections are performed according to the inspection strategy documented in the CAC's enforcement work plan. Inspections are performed according to DPR policies and procedures and inspection reports are complete and comprehensive. The inspections adequately provide the information necessary to successfully prosecute violations.

Inspections performed by the CAC were found to:

- Adequately address label, law and regulatory requirements;
- Include interviews of employers and employees as appropriate;
- Adequately document violations; and
- Include appropriate follow-up inspections and procedures.

2) Investigations

The Sonoma CAC investigation procedures and performance were evaluated through records review and interviews of relevant staff and found to conform to DPR standards and expectations. The CAC investigates all complaints and complete investigation reports in a timely manner. The CAC refers and/or notifies to DPR and other agencies as required.

Investigations are thorough and complete and submitted on approved forms and in the approved format. The investigations document violations and the CAC collects evidence according to DPR standards. The investigations adequately provide the information necessary to successfully prosecute violations.

C) Enforcement Response:

The Sonoma CAC enforcement response was evaluated through records review and interviews of relevant staff and found to conform to DPR standards and expectations. The CAC's enforcement program was found to:

- Initiate the appropriate action when violations are identified;
- Sufficiently support compliance, enforcement and public protection actions;
- Ensure that due process requirements are met when taking an enforcement or permit action or when initiating a private applicator certification or registration refusal/revocation.

The CAC follows the Enforcement Response Regulation, levies fines in the appropriate category, adheres to statutory time frames, and follows DPR policies when imposing civil penalties on employees.

III. Recommended Corrective Actions

No corrective actions are currently needed.

IV. Non-Core and Desirable Activities

Outreach and Training

The Sonoma CAC's office performed 19 continuing education seminars for industry employees on pesticide laws and regulations and worker safety. The CAC also provides outreach materials on compliance with pesticide laws and regulations and worker safety to restricted material permittees.